

# BROOKLYN TABERNACLE BIBLE STUDIES

CONFESSING THE SON OF GOD.

Matthew 4:13-23—July 17.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

OUR Master, wisely and with becoming modesty, hesitated to declare his own greatness. He allowed his actions to speak and to tell to his disciples that he proceeded and came forth from God, and that in the performing of miracles, and particularly in his teachings, he was the finger of God and his mouth-piece. John the Baptist was sent to be his special fore-runner. It was he that declared that Jesus was "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It was he that declared that the Master was so much greater than himself that he was not worthy to stoop down and loose the Master's sandals.

But after John had borne him witness, testifying, "This is he," and had declared that he saw the holy Spirit descending upon Jesus like a dove, and that this was a sign given him whereby he might know his Messiahship, then came the time for the Master to bring the matter pointedly to the attention of his followers. John had been cast into prison and later had been beheaded. John's prophetic testimony was fulfilled, when he said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The mission of Jesus and his Apostles became more prominent every day, and those who had formerly talked about John were now asking respecting Jesus, whether he was a prophet sent of God, or whether he was the Messiah. Do the rulers indeed know whether this is the Messiah or not? Surely "no man could do the miracles which he doeth unless God be with him" in some special manner.

Our Lord first inquired respecting the general opinion of the people concerning himself. He did this, not because of his own ignorance, but that he might draw out the thoughts of his disciples. They replied that some thought he was John the Baptist; others supposed he was one of the prophets. The ideas of the heathen were gradually making inroads upon the Jews. The doctrine of reincarnation, wholly unscriptural, is suggested in these answers. All the answers, of course, were wrong, for the prophets were all dead and could not reappear until the resurrection. Then our Lord pointedly put the question to his chosen followers: "Who do ye say that I am?" The courageous St. Peter promptly answered as spokesman for the whole company, "Thou art the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God." This was the very answer designed to be brought forth. It was the truth, but our Lord hesitated to present it, because it would better come from the disciples themselves and then have his endorsement. His answer to St. Peter was, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

It was not that St. Peter had experienced a special vision or revelation, but such a great spiritual fact as was then under consideration, at that time could be appreciated only by those who were specially favored of the Father. Indeed, it is evident that the same principle still operates, for we read, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him." Our primary drawing and calling is of the Father up to the time when we accept his grace in Christ and make our consecration to do his will and receive the spirit of adoption into his family as God's children; we are then put into the school of Christ to learn of him. Let us learn the lesson that the special blessings always come, not only from believing in Christ, but also from confessing to and before others.

According to the Greek, our Lord replied to Peter, "Thou art a stone, and upon this rock will I build my Church." The rock upon which the Church is built is this confession which St. Peter made. St. Peter himself was not the rock, but he was one of the living stones built by faith upon the rock of truth. It was this same Apostle who so beautifully explained the whole matter, assuring us that all consecrated believers are "living stones" in the temple of God, whose foundation and cap stone is Christ, in whom we are built together through the operation of the holy Spirit.—1 Peter 2:4-7.

The expression, "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it," is one that is much misunderstood. The gates of hell are not gates to some place of torture, nor gates to purgatory. They are, in the Greek, "gates of *hades*," and *hades* signifies a state or condition of death. The passage might well be translated, "The gates of the grave shall not prevail against it." That is to say, Christ Jesus invites the Church to die with him, to share in his sacrifice, in his death, and while, apparently, the gates of *hades* have prevailed against the Church, against God's people, for more than eighteen centuries, nevertheless, we have the assurance that they shall not forever prevail. The Master's assurance is that by his death he has become Lord of all and has the keys of death and *hades*. He has the right to open *hades*, the tomb, and to call forth all who have gone down into it. He assures us that he will do this, as he says, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth."

Nevertheless, for all these centuries it has required faith to believe that, by dying with Christ, his followers shall yet live with him—that sharing with him in his death they shall yet share with him in his resurrection to the glory, honor and immortality of the Divine nature. So, then, our Lord's words mean that there will be a resurrection from the grave, and since the Church is to be "a kind of firstfruits unto God of his creatures" (James 1:18; Revelation 14:4), her resurrection means, indirectly, this result, the uplifting of mankind, the opening of the grave to every member of the human family.

The giving of the "keys" of the Kingdom to St. Peter has no reference to locks and bars of heaven, over which St. Peter is the custodian. The Church in the present time is the Kingdom of Heaven in its preparatory or embryonic state, and St. Peter was privileged to do the opening work to the Gospel Church. He opened the door to the Jews at Pentecost, when, as the mouth-piece of the Lord, he proclaimed the meaning of the Pentecostal blessing and the hopes then open to every Jew coming, individually into membership in Christ. He used the second "key" to open the same kingdom privileges to the Gentiles, in that when the due time came for Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, to be received, St. Peter did the work. By preaching to Cornelius the Gospel and by baptizing him into Christ he threw open the door to the Gentiles, as our Lord foretold in the words of this lesson.

St. Peter's commission that whatever things he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven and what things he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven, is the same that was given to the other Apostles. (See Matthew 18:18.) It does not mean, of course, that the Lord has turned matters over to St. Peter and made him Lord of heaven and earth, nor that any or all of the Apostles were so honored. It simply means this: God purposes to use his Apostles and to so hold up their hands, in all their affairs, that the whole Church may have confidence in them, and may recognize their teachings as of God. If they declared that certain of the commandments under the Jewish law were not binding upon Christians, we must know that their statements were true, and that, similarly, in heaven, the release or change is recognized. And if they bound certain doctrines and teachings, we must know that those are bound and firmly established in heaven. In other words, we must recognize the Apostles as God's inherent mouthpieces.

The time for proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah did not come until after his death and resurrection. Indeed his Messiahship properly dates from his resurrection. He desired his disciples to recognize him properly, and he explained to them about his approaching death and resurrection, but he did not wish them to proclaim this to the world until the due time. St. Peter, perhaps elated with the Lord's commendation of his previous speech, undertook now the role of teacher to the one whom he had just acknowledged as the Messiah. In this he erred. It was in sympathy that he urged that the Master should not think of any steps which lead to suffering and death, but should rather of prosperity and earthly favor, yet our Lord's reproof was pointed. He said: You are my adversary, Peter, when you thus speak to me. You will thus endeavor to dissuade me from doing my Father's will, to hinder me from drinking the cup which my Father has poured for me; your counsel is that common to the world and not of God.

Similarly, the followers of Jesus sometimes need to resist their friends, who thus offer counsel contrary to Divine will and word and providence. These should not be encouraged nor their advice followed. They need correction from their fellow disciples, as did St. Peter.

The words of Peter furnished the Master an opportunity for calling the attention of his followers to the terms of discipleship. Not only must the Master himself suffer, but all of his followers likewise. This course was provided for every one, and whoever would flee from it would lose the eternal life hoped for. Whoever would take up his cross and follow the Master to death would thereby make sure of his share in eternal life on the heavenly plane. His disciples had already pledged their earthly lives, and for them to withhold them for worldly advantage, would mean that they would lose their souls, their lives. This is not true of the world in general, but merely of the Church, called to be of the elect, Royal Priesthood.

He then assured them of his second coming, when he would come in the glory of the Father and with his angels (messengers)—not again as a man—as a sacrifice. At the time of his second coming he would reward every one of his followers according to the faithfulness of each. He concluded this reference to the coming Kingdom by the assurance, that some of them would have an actual demonstration of his coming power and glory before they would die. This we will consider in our next study.

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If Christians allow the rust and crush of selfish ambition to deprive them of their daily portion of heavenly food, they must not be surprised if they grow spiritually leaner day by day, and if the peace of God give place in their hearts to the discontent which is growing in the world, notwithstanding the multiplication of our comforts and privileges.

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Judas the Ungrateful Apostate

The world is full of sadly disappointing characters. In many things we all fail. Selfishness, meanness, perversity, pride, etc., mark the human family most woefully. But withal can anyone find anything more reprehensible than the ingrate who would betray his best friend?

The world is of one opinion respecting such characters as that of Judas. And although he is a noted example he is by no means an exception; there are many. Some of them live today.

But whoever can see the meanness of such a disposition with a reasonably good focus will surely be saved from manifesting such a character, however mean might be his disposition. The man who could sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver is justly in contempt with all humanity. Nor was it merely the thirty pieces that influenced the ingrate. Rather it was pride. He had thought to be associated with the Master in an earthly throne. He had set his faith upon this expectation. Now that same Master explained more fully that the throne was not yet in sight; that it belongs to an age to follow this, and was to be given only to those who should prove themselves loyal and faithful unto death. In the mind of Judas the matter took not the wisest and best way. Holding the Great Teacher in contempt, the deceived one probably intended that the delivery should be merely a temporary one—a lesson to the Master not to talk that way, not to carry matters too far—an incentive to him, compelling him to exert his power for the resistance of those who sought his life and thus, in exalting himself, make good to his disciples the share in the Kingdom which he had promised or, failing of this, to wreck the entire project. Alas, the love of money, the love of power puff up and make delirious some who become intoxicated with ambition. How necessary that all the Lord's followers remember the message, "If that humbleth himself shall be exalted and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5, 6).

Her Age.

When a girl asks you to guess her age, if you think she is twenty-one take off two, if you think she is twenty-three take off three, if you think she is twenty-five take off four, and so on. This will tend to make you popular. Exchange.

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I want a good man in this territory as Local Agent for one county, or as General Agent for a number of counties. This is a new proposition, and offers you an opportunity to make from \$25.00 to \$50.00 a week, and on up to \$8,000 or \$10,000 a year. No experience is necessary; but I want a man—young or old—who will meet me—where, who will follow instructions, and who will do his level best.

One of my men (Hiram Purdy) took twenty-seven orders the first day out (sworn statement) profit \$30.00. Twenty-six orders next day. I J. Green started selling in Louisiana and became general agent, controlling extensive territory. A single time he ordered fifty agents' outfits. Land office business right off the jump. Trades orders everywhere. L. J. Richardson sold the first hour he worked. Ordered six dozen wire. Every customer pleased. Machine also fully guaranteed in every particular for life.

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RESOURCES:

Loans and Discounts	\$25,793.64
Overdrafts	2,189.61
Bonds and stocks owned	
By Bank	1,000.00
By other	1,351.16
Banking House	2,085.09
Furniture and Fixtures	9,194.33
Due from Banks and Bankers	1,100.00
Currency	267.53
Silver and other Coin	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,901.36</b>

LIABILITIES:

Capital Stock Paid In	\$20,000.00
Undivided Profits, Less	
Current Expenses and	
Tax Paid	855.74
Individual Deposits subj. to Check	13,167.05
Cashier's Checks	3,479.53
Checks Payable, including Certificates for money borrowed	5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,901.36</b>

State of South Carolina,

County of Pickens,

Before me came E. W. Tate, Cashier of the above named bank, who being duly sworn, says that the above and foregoing statement is a true condition of said bank, as shown by the books of said bank.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of Feb., 1911.

R. M. BAKER,  
Notary Public.

Corrected at St. S. A. MALLISTER,  
J. G. PHILLIPS, Directors.  
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